



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

SAFETY NEWS

Mike Huckabee, Governor

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James L. Salkeld, Director



ARKANSAS AT WORK DEVELOPING FIRST SHARP ASSOCIATION IN NATION

Pacific MDF Products in El Dorado was not only recognized as a new SHARP employer in April, but they also participated in the organization of a state SHARP Association. If the association is developed, it will be the first in the nation.

SHARP stands for Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program. It is a federal recognition and exemption program to reward small employers who have exemplary safety and health management systems.

The purpose of the association of SHARP employers is to develop a base for mentoring and outreach to other companies who are potential SHARP participants. It will also provide a format for SHARP companies to connect with one another and promote the exchange of ideas. Attendees from as far away as Oklahoma and Texas were on hand for the first meeting.

Employers are eligible to apply for SHARP if: they have no more than 250 employees on site and no more than 500 at all sites corporation-wide, they are a high-hazard industry in a single, fixed worksite, they have at least one year of operating history and they have a Lost Workday Injury and Illness Incidence rate and Total Recordable Case Rate below the industry average.

In order to become a member of the SHARP program, they must (1) Request a full service, comprehensive safety and health visit and correct all the hazards found. (2) Have implemented and maintain a safety and health management system which addresses at least the major elements of OSHA's Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines, which include:

- ✓ Hazard Anticipation and Detection
- ✓ Hazard Prevention and Control
- ✓ Planning and Evaluation
- ✓ Administration and Supervision

- ✓ Safety and Health Training
 - ✓ Management Leadership, and
 - ✓ Employee Participation
- (3) Score at least a two on all of the basic attributes of the Safety and Health Program Assessment Worksheet, and (4) Agree to notify the Arkansas Department of Labor prior to making any changes in working conditions or work processes that might introduce new hazards into the workplace.



GRAIN INDUSTRY BENEFITS FROM STANDARD

The grain industry in the U.S. is a safer place to work since OSHA's Grain Handling Facilities Standard went into effect, according to a regulatory review of the standard. Since the standard was promulgated in 1987, there were 70% fewer fatalities and 55% fewer injuries from grain explosions, and the number of grain suffocations went down 44%. The review also found that implementation of the standard has not had a negative effect on the industry generally or on small businesses within the industry.

OSHA's Grain Handling Facilities Standard focuses on requirements for controlling grain fires, grain dust explosions, and hazards associated with entry into bins, silos, and tanks. Grain mills and grain elevators are the major sections affected by this standard.



CHAO TO ENHANCE ENFORCEMENT FOR DEFIANT EMPLOYERS

Employers who expose their workers to serious safety and health hazards and who continue to defy worker safety and health regulations, will be subject to an enhanced enforcement policy that Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao recently unveiled.

OSHA's Enhanced Enforcement Policy will focus on those employers who have received "high gravity" citations. High gravity citations are issued when an employer's violations are considered to be at the highest level of severity.

The policy focuses on five specific areas that will be strengthened:

1. Follow-Up Inspections

- On-site follow-up inspections at all establishments that received an OSHA citation with "high gravity willful violations, multiple high gravity serious violations, repeat violations at the originating establishment, failure-to-abate notices, or a serious or willful violation related to a fatality."
- OSHA Area Directors may also conduct follow-up inspections at other sites to verify abatement of previously cited violations where there is reason to suspect abatement may not have occurred.

2. Programmed Inspections

- OSHA schedules programmed inspections based upon objective or neutral selection criteria through the Site Specific Targeting (SST) process. OSHA, through this initiative, will:
 - Begin to record the name of the overall

corporate entity during all inspections.

- Prioritize, within the primary and secondary SST list, all facilities under the corporate identity that have been identified as receiving high gravity violations.

3. Public Awareness

- For high gravity violations defined above, OSHA will mail a copy of the citation and notification of penalties to the employer's corporate headquarters.
- The agency will continue to issue local and national press releases on enforcement actions.

4. Settlements

OSHA will include, as needed, the following provisions in high gravity violation settlement agreements:

- Requiring employers to hire consultants to develop a process to change the safety and health culture in the facility.
- Applying the agreement corporate-wide.
- Including information on other job sites of the employer.
- Requiring employers to report to OSHA any serious injury/illness that requires outside medical care, and consenting to OSHA inspections based on the report.
- Including language that the employer consents to entry of a court enforcement order under Section 11(b) of the OSH Act.

5. Section 11 (b) Summary Enforcement Orders

- As appropriate, OSHA will apply to federal courts of appeal for orders summarily enforcing the citations under Section 11 (b) of the OSH Act. This includes citations that have been settled or have otherwise become a final order of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.
- In those cases in which an 11 (b) order has been entered and the employer remains noncompliant, OSHA will seek contempt of court sanctions.

WORKPLACES WITH HIGHEST INJURY/ILLNESS RATES LISTED

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is alerting 14,200 employers across the country that their injury and illness rates are higher than average and encouraging them to take steps to reduce hazards and protect their workers. This year marks the first time the construction industry was included in this practice.

OSHA identified establishments with the nation's highest lost workday injury and illness rates based on data reported by 93,000 employers surveyed by the agency last year (that survey collected injury and illness data from calendar year 2001). Workplaces receiving the alert letters had six or more injuries or illnesses resulting in lost workdays or restricted activity for every 100 full-time workers. Nationwide, the average U.S. workplace had just under three lost-time instances for every 100 workers.

The purpose is to not only alert employers of their above-average rates, said OSHA Administrator John Henshaw, but to also "offer assistance that will help reduce those rates. This process not only raises awareness among employers of their higher than average injury and illness rates, but it also affords them a golden opportunity to take steps to reduce those rates."

Henshaw sent letters to the employers and also provided copies of their injury and illness data, along with a list of the most frequently violated OSHA standard for their specific industry. While addressing his concerns for the high rates, Henshaw also offered the agency's help in turning those rates around, suggesting, among other things, the hiring of outside safety and health consultants, and using free safety and health consultation services provided by **contd on next page (see OSHA)**



MINING DEATHS DROP TO NEW LOW

For the second consecutive year, fatal injuries at mines in the U.S. declined to an historic new low, according to preliminary data released by the U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). The data indicate that 67 miners died in on-the-job accidents nationwide in 2002, the lowest figure on record and five fewer mine deaths than in 2001, the previous record-setting year.

In Arkansas, there was one fatality reported in the mining industry during 2002, and none in 2001. However in the year 2000, Arkansas reported two mining occupational deaths.

Fatalities in the nation's coal mining sector dropped dramatically in 2002, setting an unprecedented low with 27 deaths, compared with 42 in 2001. The previous coal low fatality record was 29 in 1998.

In the metal and nonmetal sector, mine fatalities totaled 40 in 2002, equaling the second lowest figure on record, compared with 30 in 2001. Mines in this category produce metals such as copper, silver and gold, and nonmetallic minerals such as salt, limestone, and sand and gravel.

Power haulage equipment accidents, the leading cause of fatalities in the mining industry, contributed to 16 deaths in metal/nonmetal mines and seven deaths in coal mines.

OSHA (contd. from page 2)


the agency through the states. The 14,200 sites receiving notifications are listed alphabetically, by state, on OSHA's website at:
www.osha.gov/as/opa/foia/hot_9.html

FREE CRYSTALLINE SILICA INFORMATION CARDS AVAILABLE

Crystalline silica is a basic component of soil, sand, granite, and many other materials. It is classified as a human lung carcinogen. Breathing silica dust can cause silicosis, a potentially disabling or fatal disease. Silicosis can also make exposed workers more susceptible to lung infections like tuberculosis.

Silica exposure is a serious threat to nearly two million U.S. workers. The most severe worker exposures can occur during abrasive blasting with sand. Other common exposures to silica dust can occur during the manufacturing of cement and brick; mixing or drilling concrete and mortar; and the manufacturing of china, ceramic and asphalt.

OSHA has free health hazard information cards, **Crystalline Silica Exposure**, available in both English and Spanish, which will help workers and employers understand more about how they can protect themselves against exposure to silica dust. The pocket-sized cards identify the symptoms of silicosis and the most common causes of occupational exposure, along with recommendations for protecting against exposure. They can be downloaded from the publications page on OSHA's website at www.osha.gov



TENTATIVE 2003 SCHEDULE FOR PREVENTING OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES SEMINARS

Private Sector		Public Sector	
Town	Date	Town	Date
Little Rock	May 20	Monticello	May 6
Russellville	May 22	Jonesboro	May 29
Monticello	June 6	Fort Smith	Jun 4
West Memphis	Jun 26	Mena	Jun 24
El Dorado	Jul 31	Hot Springs	Oct 21
Ashdown	August	Hope	Sep 10
Batesville	Sep 11		
Jonesboro	Sep 25		
Springdale	Oct 9		
Crossett	October		

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(l to r) Safety Administrator Clark Thomas with the Arkansas Department of Labor, Keith Glover, Producers' president/chief executive officer, and John Miles U.S. Department of Labor Regional Administrator for OSHA Region VI in Dallas become partners.

PRODUCERS RICE MILL PARTNERS WITH FEDERAL OSHA

Producers Rice Mill in Stuttgart has become the sixth company in Arkansas and the first rice milling company in the United States to enter into a partnership with OSHA.

In such a partnership, OSHA enters into an extended, voluntary, cooperative relationship with groups of employers, employees, and employee

representatives (sometimes including other stakeholders, and sometimes involving only one employer) in order to encourage, assist, and recognize their efforts to eliminate serious hazards and achieve a high level of worker safety and health.

The Arkansas Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Labor OSHA have successfully entered into the same partnership agreements with Arkansas Timber Producers Association, the Associated Builders and Contractors of Arkansas, Tyson Foods in Clarksville, Odom's Tennessee Pride, and Associated General Contractors of America.

According to CEO Keith Glover, Producers' Lost Work Day percentage has gone from 42 percent in 1983 to 3.1 percent in 2002. He went on to credit the company's close working relationship with the Arkansas Department of Labor as playing a major role in its successful safety and health program.